

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 1486

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, NO, UR, OVIP (BROWN, HAROLD)
SUBJECT: SECDEF VISIT: BACKGROUND PAPER: NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING THE PAST YEAR, NORWAY'S RELATIONS WITH THE USSR HAVE COMMANDED A LARGE SHARE OF BOTH THE GON AND THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION IN NORWAY. KOSYGIN'S SURPRISING TIRADE AGAINST NORWAY, DELIVERED IN HELSINKI IN EARLY DECEMBER, WHILE DRAMATIC, DID NOT INDICATE ANY MAJOR SHIFT IN THE ONGOING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS. THE USSR, DUE TARGELY TO GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS, HAS LONG SOUGHT TO WEAKEN NORWAY'S TIES TO NATO. IN ADDITION, THE TWO NATIONS FIND THEMSELVES INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF ISSUES, INCLUDING SVALBARD, AND UN-RESOLVED OFFSHORE BOUNDARY AND FISHERIES LIMITS, WHERE COOPERATION IS HARD TO COME BY. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND: NORWAY'S GEOGRAPHIC POSITION GIVES THE NATION A SPECIAL ROLE IN BOTH NATO AND SOVIET UNION STRATEGIC PLANNING. WITH A BORDER ONLY A HUNDRED KILOMETERS FROM THE USSR'S KOLA PENINSULA MILITARY COMPLEX AND WITH A COASTLINE THAT COMMANDS THE ACCESS TO THE SOVIET'S NORTHERN FLEET MURMANSK HEADQUARTERS, NORWAY HAS LONG FIGURED DISPROPORTIONATELY IN SOVIET POLITICAL/MILITARY PLANNING. DESPITE THE SELF-IMPOSED LIMITATIONS ON ITS NATO MEMBERSHIP (NO FOREIGN MILITARY BASES IN PEACETIME; NO STATIONING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS), NORWAY HAS NONETHELESS, AS EVIDENCED BY KOSYGIN'S
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HELSINKI TIRADE, BECOME THE SOVIET'S MAIN TARGET IN SCANDINAVIA. IN ADDITION, IN REGARD TO ISSUES SUCH AS SVALBARD, THE UNRESOLVED OFFSHORE BOUNDARY AND NORTHERN FISHERIES, THE NORWEGIANS FIND THEMSELVES OPPOSING USSR EFFORTS TO "BILATERALIZE"--THE ENTIRE RANGE OF AREA QUESTIONS AND ACHIEVE A NORWEGIAN/SOVIET NORTHERN "CONDOMINIUM."

3. SVALBARD: UNDER TERMS OF THE SPITZBERGEN TREATY, NORWAY IS THE SOVEREIGN POWER ON THE SPITZBERGEN ARCHIPELAGO, ALTHOUGH ALL 41 TREATY SIGNATORIES HAVE ACCESS TO THE DEMILITARIZED TERRITORY AND ITS RESOURCES. IN PRACTICE ONLY NORWAY AND THE USSR HAVE PERMANENT POPULATIONS ON SVALBARD, WITH THE SOVIET POPULATION THE LARGER OF THE TWO. THE OSTENSIBLE REASON FOR THE SOVIET PRESENCE IS THE WORKING OF COAL DEPOSITS. NORWAY, AFTER DECADES OF NEGLECT, HAS BEGUN, IN RECENT YEARS, TO ASSERT ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHTS IN THE AREA. THE SOVIETS HAVE RESISTED THE NORWEGIAN MOVES, CLAIMING A VAGUELY DEFINED "SPECIAL ROLE" ARISING FROM THE TREATY ITSELF AS WELL AS FROM THEIR GEOGRAPHIC POPINQUITY AND THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY OF THEIR NATIONALS. WHILE CLAIMING TO RECOGNIZE NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY, THE SOVIETS FREQUENTLY IGNORE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS ON SVALBARD, CLAIMING THAT SUCH REGULATION IMPINGES ON THEIR TREATY RIGHTS.

4. BOUNDARY QUESTION: THE MOVE TOWARDS 200-MILE OFFSHORE ECONOMIC ZONES BROUGHT TO A HEAD THE QUESTION OF THE NORWEGIAN-SOVIET OFFSHORE BOUNDARY IN THE BARENTS SEA. THE NORWEGIANS ASSERT THAT THE MEDIAN LINE IS THE PROPER BOUNDARY, BUT HAVE INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE. THE USSR ASSERTS THAT THE SECTOR LINE, EXTENDING FAR TO THE WEST, IS THE PROPER BOUNDARY AND HAVE STATED THAT IT IS NOT NEGOTIABLE. THE USSR APPEARS TO BE IN NO HURRY TO REACH A SETTLEMENT AND MAY PLAN TO USE THE NORWEGIAN SENSE OF URGENCY ON THIS MATTER TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS FROM THE NORWEGIANS ON BOTH THE BOUNDARY AND ON OTHER MATTERS.

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5. GREY ZONE: THE LACK OF A DEFINED OFFSHORE BOUNDARY AND THE MOVE TOWARD 200-MILE ZONES IN THE BARENTS SEA, COMBINED WITH MORE INTENSIVE FISHING IN THE AREA, NECESSITATED A TEMPORARY DELINEATION OF FISHERY ZONES IN THE DISPUTED AREA, THE MUCH CRITICIZED "GREY ZONE" AGREEMENT. THE AGREEMENT CALLS FOR JOINT SOVIET-NORWEGIAN FISHERIES JURISDICTION IN THE AREA BETWEEN THE SECTOR LINE AND THE MEDIAN LINE. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, JOINT FISHERIES JURISDICTION APPLIES IN AN AREA OF 23,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS WEST OF THE FURTHEST SOVIET BORDER CLAIM (SECTOR LINE) AS WELL AS TO AN AREA OF 3,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE. THE AGREEMENT IS LABELED BY THE SIGNATORIES AS TEMPORARY AND NOT PREJUDICIAL TO EITHER SIDE'S CLAIMS IN THE AREA. LOCAL CRITICS, HOWEVER, NOTICE THAT THE USSR NOW HAS JOINT FISHERIES JURISDICTION IN THE ENTIRE DISPUTED AREA AS WELL AS IN A SIZEABLE ZONE TO THE WEST OF THEIR FURTHEST CLAIM,

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SEE THE ULTIMATE BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT COMPROMISED BY WHAT THEY FORESEE AS PROLONGED SOVIET JURISDICTIONAL STATUS IN THESE WATERS. THEY FORESEE THE SOVIET UNION REMAINING UN-RESPONSIVE ON THE BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT AND USING "RESOURCE MANAGEMENT" NEEDS AS A DEVICE TO ESTABLISH A PRESENCE IN THE AREA.

6. GERMAN TROOP QUESTION: THE GON, DESPITE A PUBLIC STATEMENT IN 1976 ANNOUNCING A "NORMALIZATION" OF MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, IN JANUARY 1978, CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED ITS INTENTION OF KEEPING GERMANY IN A SPECIAL DACTGORY IN REGARD TO MANEUVERS IN NORWAY. THE DECISION, APPARENTLY MADE IN OCTOBER 1977 WAS, IN LARGE PART, A RESPONSE TO HIGH LEVEL FINNISH STATEMENTS OF CONCERN ABOUT GERMAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN NORWAY. IT WAS MADE PUBLIC, HOWEVER, SUBSEQUENT TO THE KOSYGIN OUTBURST AND THE VISIT TO OSLO OF A SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER. ACCORDINGLY, THE PERCEPTION IN MANY QUARTERS, INCLUDING PERHAPS MOSCOW, WAS THAT OF THE GON BACKING DOWN IN RESPONSE TO STRONG REPRESENTATION FROM MOSCOW.

7. SVALBARD FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE: THE CURRENT MOST PRESENT ITEM OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR IS THE NORWEGIAN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE AROUND SVALBARD. THEIR HOPE IS THAT THE USSR, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHILE PROBABLY CONTINUING TO DENY THE GON'S RIGHT TO ESTABLISH SUCH A ZONE, WOULD, IN PRACTICE, AGREE TO PRACTICAL MEASURES TO PROTECT THE FISHERIES STOCKS IN THE NORTHERN REGIONS. THE COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING LOS MINISTER EVENSEN'S RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW IN PURSUIT OF THIS OBJECTIVE WAS A MODEL OF AMBIGUITY. BRIEFINGS PROVIDED BY THE MFA HAVE

ALSO FAILED TO MAKE CLEAR JUST WHAT, IF ANY, AREAS OF AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED WITH THE USSR CONCERNING THE

FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE. FURTHER NORWEGIAN/SOVIET DISCUSSIONS ARE CLEARLY IN THE OFFING. THE US, AS A SPITZBERGEN TREATY SIGNATORY, IS A CONCERNED PARTY IN REGARD TO THE SVALBARD FPZ IN CONTRAST TO THE US ROLE CONCERNING THE BILATERAL SOVIET/NORWEGIAN "GREY ZONE" AGREEMENT.

8. OUTLOOK: THE SOVIETS, WITH MUCH AT STAKE IN THE NORTHERN REGIONS, CAN BE COUNTED ON TO CONTINUE THEIR PRESSURE ON NORWAY. THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF NORWAY, HOWEVER, REMAIN STRONGLY COMMITTED TO NATO AND REGARD THEIR LINKS TO THE US, BOTH THROUGH THE ALLIANCE AND DIRECTLY, AS THE KEY TO THEIR SECURITY.

9. DURING YOUR VISIT, WE RECOMMEND THAT, IN ANY DISCUSSION OF THE USSR, YOU STRESS THE FOLLOWING:

--THE IMPORTANCE WITH THE US VIEWS NORWAY'S STRENGTH TO THE NORTH HAS EXPANDED NORWAY'S ALREADY CONSIDERABLE ROLE IN DEFENSE AGAINST SOVIET AGGRESSION.

--THE NEED FOR ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY, MANIFESTED BOTH BY HAVING ALL MEMBERS MEET THEIR COMMITMENTS TO INCREASED NATIONAL DEFENSE EFFORTS AND IN RESISTING SOVIET EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THE ALLIANCE ON SPECIFIC MATTERS SUCH AS ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS.

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10. OUR RELATIONS WITH NORWAY ARE SUCH THAT THERE ARE VERY FEW LIMITS ON DISCUSSION. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, TWO SOVIET-NORWEGIAN TOPICS ON WHICH THE NORWEGIANS HAVE RECENTLY DEMONSTRATED EXTREME SENSITIVITY:

--ON THE FRG TROOP DECISION, WHICH THEY KNOW THEY HANDLED BADLY, THERE IS LITTLE TO BE GAINED BY BRINGING UP AGAIN THIS SOURCE OF EMBARRASMENT TO THE GON.

--IN REGARD TO THE "GREY ZONE", EFFORTS BY THE PRESS TO PORTRAY THE US AS CRITICIZING THE GON HANDLING OF THE MATTER CAUSED CONSIDERABLE UNHAPPINESS WITHIN THE GON. WHILE ALL RESPONSIBLE GON FIGURES NOW AGREE THAT THE USG HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PRESS STORIES AND WOULD NOT INJECT ITSELF INTO SUCH PURELY BILATERAL NORWEGIAN/SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS, THE SENSITIVITY ON THIS TOPIC HAS NOT ENTIRELY DISAPPEARED.

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